



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Spokane
Study Session
Minutes
May 21, 2004.

I. Call to Order. Meeting called to order at 3:15 p.m.

II. Roll Call.

Commissioners present: Leo Gaeta, Gabriel Banfi, Uriel Iñiguez, Yvonne Lopez-Morton, Faviola Barbosa, Gabriel Portugal, Rebecca Villareal, and Diana Avalos.

Commissioners absent: Karla Padilla-Reyna (not excused) and Homero Tamez (excused).

Staff present: Cindy García

Guest present: Antonio M. Ginatta

III. Commissioner Activity Reports:

Before the Commissioners presented their reports Antonio let the Commissioners know why there is a push for the reports. The Commission's Strategic Plan has just been finalized. Based on the reports the Commissioners submit, performance measures are taken. For FY 2003 the Commission participated in 71 community meetings and advised 48 policymakers and administrators. For FY 2004 (as of 5/1/04) the Commission has participated in 122 community meetings and has advised 41 policymakers and administrators.

Commissioner Barbosa:

- Has not been in contact with Brewster. The last point of contact was Antonio with the letter he wrote to Principal Phillips, asking him to respond to the first letter that was issued out.
- Attended the meetings for the tent housing project for farmworker.
- New item. A person in the community who works as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) came to office and voiced concern that he has been serving as an advocate for six months, and has noticed discrepancies in the way families are treated. Has confidential information and would like to share or testify but wants immunity.

Antonio stated the Governor's office is concerned about these issues. Suggested that the person write an anonymous letter to the Commission and then we can start investigating on our own. Then the Commission can follow up.

Chair Gaeta asked Commissioner Barbosa what the school's response was to the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) peace demonstration. Commissioner Barbosa responded that the school was in lockdown. Administration said they felt it was better for the kids to be in a lock down while the demonstrations were going on. Chair Gaeta stated that at this time, the Commission is just going to do some follow-ups with Brewster. Commissioner Barbosa will be the lead on the Brewster issue.

Commissioner Lopez-Morton:

- Attended a session on education issue on congress regarding race relations and a
- Hispanic organizations meeting with health care providers and law enforcement regarding translation issues, also working on a
- new initiative with Andy Holguin, in conjunction with Gonzaga, math & literacy tutor program.
- Met with Sheriff department recruitment initiatives and
- met with Don Barbeiry wanted to know more on Dream act.
- On the Advisory Board of El Centro de Spokane.
- Attended the Latino Educational Achievement Project (LEAP) Advisory board meeting.

Commissioner Villareal:

- Had a meeting in April with Washington State General Administration about putting on some small business workshops or summit.
- Is working with Small Business Association to do a Mutual Agreement and has tried to meet with Bob Meredith. Lynn Hamilton is the Interim Director twice with no success.
- Doing the next small business summit in the fall.
- Attended the US Department of Labor & Seattle Center put on a "Las Mujeres y el Dinero" an education class on how to handle money.

Commissioner Portugal:

- Scholarships were given to students that sometimes don't qualify for normal, typical scholarships. Hispanic Academic Achievement Program (HAAP), gave \$62,500 in scholarship money. About 2,100 people attended. Students from Pasco, Kennewick and smaller districts were recognized.
- Chief of Police from Pasco Police Department has a presentation "Reducing Crimes". Chair Gaeta had requested to have the power point presentation available. The power point illustrates the concept of how the police and the community can decrease crime by community policing.
- Helping the SWVR (Southwest Voter Registration) project. Groups from the college & high school helping with dissemination of information.

Commissioner Banfi:

- Working closely on Eastside Latino Legislative Forum (ELLF) and a
- new program that has been introduced by Graciela Lang. Lang has written an eight page comprehensive report for the Bellevue School District, which deals more with cultural issue rather than educational issues. Report states that there is a true disconnect with what's going on with Hispanic families and children. The report basically states to create a Hispanic PTA.

Commissioner Iñiguez:

- Board Member of Thurston County Network. Per legislature every county needs to have a network to deal with community issues.
- Just became a board member of CIELO – a Latino organization in Olympia.
- Participated in an advisory board to Lacey Police Department.
- Participated in Roundtable group: Mesa Redonda of Thurston County.
- Working with CHOICE on language access.
- Attended a leadership luncheon at Seattle University.
- Working on the Guatemalan brush picker issues.

Chair Gaeta:

- Representatives from Seamar, Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic (YVFWC), Chair Gaeta testified at the Rules Change Hearing on changes in the Maternity Support Services/Infant Case Management programs that have a big impact for Latina women. Changes in the criteria will be effective July 1, 2004 and provides more flexibility in making Latina women eligible for these services.
- Mattawa community needs assessment done. Served as interpreter and as facilitator at some of these meetings.

Commissioner Avalos:

- Also working on Guatemalan brush pickers issue. Needs to set up a meeting with the representative from L&I.
- Received a call from Antonio Sanchez, set to meet regarding Lieutenant Governor proposal for funding legislative priority on the dropout issue.
- Serving on the advisory board of the Washington State University (WSU) Vancouver Branch for multicultural recruitment.
- WSU advisory board is implementing a mentorship program. Mentoring kids of color with faculty.

IV. Committee Reports

Personnel Committee:

- Commissioner Lopez-Morton stated she was impressed with the applicants. The focus was to recruit someone from law enforcement. Top three candidates are law enforcement. The top three candidates are Carlos Alberto Martinez, Ascension Castillo, and Johnny Gonzales. All three candidates have great credentials.

Commissioner Gaeta stated that at the Public meeting the motion should be made to forward the three names to the Governor.

Action Step: The Personnel Committee will make a motion to forward the top three candidates to the Governor for selection at the public meeting.

Emergent Issues Committee:

- Commissioner Banfi stated the committee is in a semi-transitional phase. Commissioner Tamez will be taking over the chair.
- The committee has been discussing the pesticides issue. Commissioner Banfi asked for the assignments for the annual report.

Education Committee:

- Commissioner Avalos reported she took the initiative to draft some ideas for the annual report on high school dropout prevention.
- Certificated bilingual educated interpreters, these are not certified teachers, but serve the role as interpreter. Case in point, certificated court interpreter have to go through a process, there's no program in place to certify the assistants.
- Senate Bill 6268 researched and drafted an outline.

Commissioner Banfi asked if we are calling for legislation to provide both oral and written exam to become a bilingual assistant in the school district. Commissioner Avalos responded by stating that it would set a standard. Commissioner Portugal stated that some districts have a test for bilingual proficiency. Where as the court certification process is the same across the state, Para pro testing is developed at local levels.

A deadline for the annual report articles was requested. All articles are to be submitted to staff by the first week of June.

Action Plan: All chairs of the committees need to have their reports in to the office by the first week of June 4th for staff to review. Annual Report needs to be out by June 30th.

V. Transition Plan: Antonio is taking a leave of absence, to pursue a personal goal of his. Uriel Iñiguez will be our interim Executive Director while Antonio is on leave of absence. Commissioner Iñiguez will have to resign as a Commissioner, as of June 1st.

Commissioner Lopez-Morton asked if the vacant Commissioner position would be filled. Antonio answered that it will not be filled. The Governor has expressed interest in keeping Commissioner Iñiguez.

Chair Gaeta explained that different options had been looked at, to keep the Commission on track with the outlined goals. Antonio will still be available to support the work of the Commission. It is going to be critical that we don't lose the momentum. Commissioner Gaeta asked the Commissioners to work to accomplish what we set out to do.

Commissioner Portugal stated concerns that the Commission had nothing to do with the granting of the leave of absence, and appointing the interim. Chair Gaeta explained that it was the Governors' decision. A press release will be issued by the Governor's office.

Action Step: Cindy will send the press release to the Commissioners when it becomes available.

VI. Letters of Support: Antonio has drafted resolution statements for both the Dream Act and for Immigration Policy. Antonio was asked to read the resolution. (See addendums 1 and 2).

Commissioner Banfi asked if on the first one, second to last line, "and family" could be added.

Action Step: The resolution statements will be presented at the public meeting for approval. After approval, Cindy will post on web site and send to media for press release.

VII. Joint Commission Meeting

In the previous meeting there was discussion of changing the Olympia meeting to the fall instead of having it in January.

Commissioner Iñiguez will obtain information on dates that are more appropriate, November or December.

Chair Gaeta wanted to make a determination as a Commission if the date change is feasible.

Commissioner Banfi went on to voice his concerns. His concern was assurance that the Commission will be noticed.

It was asked that a motion be made for the public meeting for discussion.

Action Step: A Commissioner will make a motion for discussion of moving Joint Commission Meeting to November or December at the public meeting.

VIII. Latino Legislative Day

Chair Gaeta explained to plan a legislative day we need to be proactive a year before the actual date. The Commission can be a part of organizing a Latino Legislative day, but does not have all the resources to accomplish this event.

Commissioner Banfi suggested we plan the Latino Legislative day for 2006.

The possibility of partnering up with the LEAP annual conference for the Latino Legislative day discussion took place. Ricardo Sanchez, Executive Director of LEAP, would need to be asked. It was agreed that if LEAP was okay with partnering up this year, it would be great, if not, the Commission should wait until 2006.

Chair Gaeta stated that he would like to contact the Hispanic organizations and sending a survey and see who is interested. The preliminary steps would be to send questionnaire to organizations and see what kind of commitment they would be willing to make.

Action Step: Chair Gaeta will devise a survey to send to different community organizations.

IX. Transition Plan: Delegate Plans

Clarification of who sits on what committee.

Education Committee: Commissioner Avalos, Commissioner Barbosa and Commissioner Portugal.

Personnel Committee: Commissioner Iñiguez and Commissioner Lopez-Morton.

Economic Development Committee: Commissioner Villareal, Commissioner Lopez-Morton, Commissioner Barbosa and Commissioner Iñiguez.

Emergent Issues Commission: Commissioner Tamez, Commissioner Banfi, Chair Gaeta, and Commissioner Lopez-Morton

Commissioner Lopez-Morton stated she wanted to stay in Emergent Issues Committee, and get out of Economic Development Committee.

Commissioner Villareal stated that since she only has one person on her committee, could she recruit from outside the Commission for committee members.

Chair Gaeta stated recruitment for outside volunteers can be done.

Delegation of transition items:

Chair Gaeta stated there were a total of nine items to be delegated.

Health Care Disparities: Chair Gaeta

Dropout Prevention: Commissioner Avalos

Language Access in Health Care: Commissioner Iñiguez

Mattawa Child Care: Chair Gaeta

Brewster High School: Commissioner Barbosa

Pesticide Poisoning: Commissioner Tamez (Emergent Issues Committee)

Legislative priorities: Chair Gaeta asked Antonio if he would do it. Antonio responded he could help. Discussion for Legislative priorities will take place at next study session meeting. Commissioner Banfi requested half an hour on the Study Session agenda for the legislative agenda at the next study session.

Action Item: Cindy will e-mail all previous legislative priorities to Commissioners.

Action Item: Legislative priority reports due next study session meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

ADDENDUM 1

WHEREAS, the education of our children is the great equalizer;

WHEREAS, many high achieving, academically outstanding Latino students are without options to legalize their immigration status;

WHEREAS, these students are members of our community, are American in every sense, have built their lives in our country and strive to succeed in the United States;

WHEREAS, these students are the untapped positive potential of our country;

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Commission officially recognize the challenges these students face, their drive and dedication, and that the Commission advise our Congressional delegation to support the DREAM Act, to provide an avenue for legalization for students who have graduated from high school in the US, have resided for several years in our country, and who call the United States home.

ADDENDUM 2

WHEREAS, the United States is a country rich with a history of immigrant contribution, dedication, and sacrifice;

WHEREAS, Latino immigrants risk their lives to cross the border to work in under-appreciated, low-paying, and often dangerous jobs;

WHEREAS, the economy of our country, particularly the agricultural industry, depends on the work of Latino undocumented immigrants;

WHEREAS, current immigration policy divides families, stifles the rights of workers, drives communities underground; and threatens the overall health of our country;

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Commission advise our Congressional delegation on the necessity of a comprehensive immigration reform, a reform that addresses the barriers faced by all immigrants to our country, the recently-arrived, the long-term resident, and those to come in the future; the farmworker and the non-farmworker; the families of immigrants that reside within the United States and those outside the United States; and a reform that recognizes the dignity of work, and protects the immigrant worker and family just as all other workers are protected.